



## HISTORY

The rich natural resources of the lower Columbia River sustained people for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans. Over the last decade, archaeologists uncovered the remains of a large ancient village bearing testimony to an enduring and intimate relationship between native people and the land. Radiocarbon dating has determined that human habitation here dates back at least 2,300 years, making it one of the oldest inhabited sites known in the floodplain of the lower Columbia River.

Explorers Lewis & Clark documented the village of Cathlapotle (*Cath-la-poo-tuhl* or *Cath-la-poe-tuhl*) in their journals while on their way to the Pacific Ocean on November 5, 1805. They counted 14 cedar plankhouses belonging to the people of the "*Quathlapotle nation*" and estimated some 900 inhabitants. From the shore, seven canoes of Indians from the village paddled out to inspect the strangers and trade with them. Returning in March 1806, Lewis and Clark stopped again at Cathlapotle for several hours.

The cedar plankhouse was the typical dwelling of the Chinookan people. A large plankhouse might house three families or three generations of the same family. Location within the plankhouse corresponded to the family's place in the social hierarchy. One or more hearthboxes for cooking or ceremonies were located between mid-posts. Fish and other foods were often hung from the rafters for drying. Woven mats, baskets, and wooden boxes were used for storage under sleeping platforms.

The Chinook were active traders. Prestige was attached to the acquisition of wealth, including items such as canoes and beaver skins. A person's wealth was actively displayed and gift-giving was part of many social rituals.

Chinookan art reflects the spiritual importance of all sources of subsistence. For example, stylized depictions of fish were placed on baskets, mats and the outside walls of plankhouses. Geometric forms and human figures were also frequent design elements.

## CULTURE

## PURPOSE

### Friends of the Plankhouse

The Cathlapotle Plankhouse commemorates the Lewis and Clark expedition. It provides a window through time onto the culture and daily life of native Chinookan people. The Plankhouse and its exhibits also illustrate the significant role natural resources played in local native culture.

The Friends of the Plankhouse have taken as their mission to assist the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge in managing the plankhouse to maximize its use as an educational and cultural resource. Please join the Friends and

#### Help us provide:

- ◆ Trained volunteer docents who host visitors & interpret the plankhouse, site & exhibits.
- ◆ Educational programs to give adults and students hands-on experiences of Chinookan life style and crafts.
- ◆ A gathering place for community and Chinook tribal events and celebrations.
- ◆ Financial support for exhibits, events & education.

#### With your help:

*The Cathlapotle Plankhouse will continue to grow as a vital center for learning and for celebration of our region's unique cultural heritage.*



### BE A FRIEND!!

The Cathlapotle Plankhouse is a landmark and community resource. Please help us enrich public awareness of our local history and unique cultural heritage. Check your membership choice below & return this completed form with your dues to:

Friends of the Cathlapotle Plankhouse  
P.O. Box 1405  
Ridgefield, WA 98642

#### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

- ☐ \$10 Student/Senior/Volunteer  
☐ \$20 Basic Member  
☐ \$50 Contributing Member  
☐ \$100 Supporting Member

#### FAMILY MEMBERSHIP (single household)

- ☐ \$20 Senior/Volunteer Family  
☐ \$40 Basic Family  
☐ \$100 Contributing Family  
☐ \$200 Supporting Family

#### CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

- ☐ \$100 Basic Corporate  
☐ \$500 Contributing Corporate  
☐ \$1,000 Supporting Corporate

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

#### SPECIAL SKILLS OR INTERESTS:

- ☐ Education      ☐ Facilities  
☐ Outreach      ☐ Fundraising  
☐ Volunteer Docent      ☐ Native crafts

Other: \_\_\_\_\_



P.O. Box 1405  
Ridgefield, WA 98642

Friends of the Cathlapotle Plankhouse

## FRIENDS OF THE CATHLAPOTLE PLANKHOUSE

at the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge



Join us to help:



Celebrate local native culture



Educate and excite



Bring history alive